

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Comm-12.14ces

other potential factors affecting student decision making including Brexit, three years lower farm incomes and other issues including the current demographic downturn. It was less clear whether or not there was specific factors influencing decision-making around Engineering programmes other than the current demographic downturn;

- iii) that University Executive had agreed that a student retention group should be set up focusing on identifying and putting in place proactive ways to ensure that student retention was maximised as far as possible;
- iv) that University Executive had discussed the opportunity to consider developing an extended degree for students who narrowly missed the A level entry requirements and need to top-up prior to progression to a Degree programme. This is currently being explored;
- v) that Jo Johnson had been reappointed as Minister for Universities and Science. In light of this it was believed that the TEF outcome may be released sooner than was originally thought however no firm date had yet been confirmed;
- vi) that George Eustace would continue as Farming Minister with Michael Gove heading DEFRA. The Vice-Chancellor's office was currently inviting both Mr Johnson and Mr Gove to visit the University;
- vii) that the Higher Education and Research Act had been enacted and had significant implications. Commentators are advising that it the bill is

- xiii) that the Vice-Chancellor had addressed the HEFCE catalyst panel during the week focusing on the use of the University's use of catalyst funds to develop the Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre (AEIC) and facilitate the relocation of the Dairy Crest Research and Innovation team on to the University's campus. Feedback had been very positive with the panel confirming that they were very impressed with the use the University had made of the funds. HEFCE staff had also suggested that a further application from the University would be positively received should appropriate projects come to the fore. This would be discussed further with prospective partners;
- xiv) that two Harper Students had been shortlisted for the Farmer's Weekly awards. In addition to this the Harper Adams Cereals Challenge team had come second and a further team had won the Guild of Agricultural Journalists Award at the Cereals event;

- xxiii) that the University continued to be aware of developments linked to the University Centre, Shrewsbury Project.

16/50 **Management Accounts**

Received: the management accounts to the period 30 April 2017.

16/51 **Budget/Financial Planning**

Considered

consolidated report on all KPIs measured against the Financial Strategy even though it was recognised that these may have been reported as individual or groups of KPIs in other documents ; **LF**

- vi) that the proposed budget for 2017/18 and Financial Forecast for 2018/122 had been based on an anticipated student intake of 630 for September 2017. It was recognised that this was lower than the University had wished to achieve but given application numbers it was felt that this was realistic and that in future the University would continue to do its best to achieve an intake of 650 or higher wherever possible

- xxiii) that a number of new requests for other capital projects had been received but not all had been put forward in the budget as affordability needed to be considered carefully together with the contingency that would be discussed further under Reserved Business. The underlying budget for capital was c. £3 million and this would be challenging to meet and it was recognised that a number of projects would not be progressed.
- xxiv) that the documents included information on risks and opportunities and Members noted in particular that a lot of proactive work was underway to mitigate risks wherever possible;
- xxv) that the forecast had not made any further assumptions around pensions increases but these were recognised as a potential risk at the time period of the forecast.
- xxvi) that in light of the most recent grant letter the forecast included a £300,000 reduction in 2017/18 and assumed that there will be similar reduction and cuts in future years. The forecast had also assumed an ISF income at 50%nd assw IS that in lintecero3.1 (d.494 0 Td(t)- (n a)220.2 e u)-1.1

- Noted:
- i) that the report on the financial health of the HE sector had been useful for discussions about the budget and the financial forecast earlier in the agenda;
 - ii) that the key change to the Memorandum of Assurance and Accountability related to the inclusion of TEF and references to the Office for Students etc. It was also understood that the borrowing threshold will be changed and will reflect adjusted net operating cash flow in line with a model developed by HEFCE in discussion with BUFDG. The Director of Finance had reflected on the model and was content that this would not cause issues for Harper Adams;

16/53 **Strategic Topics for Discussion at Board Meetings**

Received:

- i) A paper setting out topics for discussion

Noted:

- i) that the prog2jEMC ET1.se2.2 7.18 0 Td()Tj/TT (t)- Die989d (t)- Die989d (t)- Ded ng
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Board that an advert should be placed in the near future and the Board had approved this. It was, therefore, possible for the advert to particularly seek expressions of interest from individuals with HR experience.

CEB/DGL

- vi) That in the past a Boardroom practice reflection exercise had taken place and it may be useful to conduct such an exercise in the future. This would be kept under review;

16/54 **Strategic Project Monitoring**

- Received: i) an oral report on progress with Agri-Tech projects.
- Noted: ii) that practical completion of the Agri-Epi hub is expected within the next 24/48 hours. A roof leak had been identified and was in the process of being fully addressed. It was hopeful that occupation could now be taken forward with PhD students taking up residence shortly. It was understood from Agri-Epi that a number of tenants had already been identified;
- iii) that there will be some development funds left available for Agri-Epi site managers to determine final finishing touches;
- iv) that Agri-Epi were planning on a stakeholder event to be held on 30th June which would include representatives of DEFRA and members/ industry representatives of the wider Agri-Epi community;
- v) that the SMART dairy was due to be completed in early August;
- vii) that SLAs were being developed and health and safety arrangements were being put in place by Agri-Epi;

16/55 **Estate Developments**

- Received: i) a paper by the University Secretary on progress with current estate Developments.
- Agreed: that the report confirmed that a range of estate projects were being appropriately managed and progressed as previously agreed by the Committee.

16/56 **Report from Cedar Energy Limited**

- Received: i) a report from the Estates and facilities Manager/Director of Finance on Cedar Energy Limited in their role as Director/ Secretary of Cedar Energy Limited;
- Noted: i) that a number of challenges continued to be addressed in relation to

with the contract and to negotiate if possible with the contractor ways in which the project could be successfully commissioned and completed in a reasonable timescale. Members also confirmed that they were committed to ensuring that commissioning was conducted appropriately as this would be fundamental to ensuring that the system worked appropriately once it was completed;

- iii) that the University were aware that there had been some delays caused by utility companies and they were continuing to press this and had sought support from contacts at Eversheds to secure this documentation as soon as possible;
- iv) that the Committee was supportive of the approach being taken by the University and would be happy to be kept informed in due course.

16/57 **Committees**

Received: i)